The Practice of International Interventions in El Salvador: Problems of Building a Liberal Peace.[1]

Chris van der Borgh[2]

On 16 January 1992, the signing of the Salvadoran peace agreements between the government of El Salvador and the left-wing guerrilla movement FMLN was celebrated in various places in San Salvador. The parties to the conflict celebrated at different locations in the city. In the centre of the city, sympathisers of the guerrilla movement gathered. They celebrated a peace agreement that was in the first place a political agreement that aimed to stop the violence by demilitarising and democratising political life. It thus addressed an important cause of the violent conflict in the country. However, it left other issues that the FMLN saw as 'root causes' unaddressed, for instance the unequal distribution of land. In the months after the signing of the peace agreement, I discussed this with a number of FMLN supporters. Most of them were confident that these changes were necessary first steps in what some called a 'democratic revolution', arguing that these reforms would pave the road for the FMLN to win the elections that were to take place two years later.

In this lecture I will look back at El Salvador's transition from war to peace in the ten to fifteen years that followed. As international actors played an important role in the process of peacemaking and peacebuilding in El Salvador, I will start with a short discussion about the ideas of international actors about how to build peace. Over the past decades there has been a trend

[2] Chris van der Borgh is associate professor at the Centre for Conflict Studies at Utrecht University. E-mail: c.vanderborgh@uu.nl

towards more ambitious and comprehensive policies and the idea that 'root causes' should be addressed, preferably simultaneously, is dominant. Increasingly, however, the question is raised whether all these causes can be addressed at the same time? I argue that, in the case of El Salvador, ambitions were still relatively modest. They led to stabilisation, a reduction of political violence and democratisation in the short and medium term. However, the agreements were not able to prevent or address *new* forms of violence in El Salvador (which are now mostly 'social' instead of political) and the consequence of enduring socioeconomic problems that the peace agreements of the 1990s were unable to address. So in El Salvador there is a paradoxical situation in which a peace operation was first seen as a success story, but today the extremely high homicide rates in the country – which are among the highest in the world – are no reason for complacency. What does this say about the possibilities of peace operations and their ability to deal with 'root causes'?

Peacebuilding

In period after the Cold War, international organisations have played an ever growing role in ending civil wars and the subsequent processes of reconstruction and development. In the period between 1988 and 1994, the number of UN peace missions tripled, while other international actors – like the European Union (EU), the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) and the African Union (AU) – organised peace missions. In addition, bilateral donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) became more and more active in conflict and post-conflict zones. The idea that security and development are closely interrelated has become widespread in the international community and is reflected in the term 'peacebuilding'.

The idea of peacebuilding starts from the notion that stopping an intrastate war takes more than just bringing the violence to an end. A distinction is made between preserving a 'negative' peace – silencing the guns – and the social process in which the circumstances and conditions are created for a sustainable peace. This would lead to a 'positive' peace, and requires

addressing the *deeper causes* of the conflict, such as state weakness, bad governance, unequal distribution of land, or discrimination against religious or ethnic groups. It is therefore assumed that, in most peace processes, various processes of change should take place at the same time. This has been called a triple transition where the reforms needed to improve the security situation, to build a functioning democracy and economic liberalisation reinforce each other and must be pursued as simultaneously as possible.

Today, most peacebuilding is *liberal* peacebuilding. The practice of liberal peacebuilding developed in the 1990s and in fact meant that the Washington Consensus (which promoted market liberalism and good governance) was made '(former) war zone' proof, since it linked an existing agenda to create market democracies to stabilisation and pacification. At a later stage academics argued that this form of peacebuilding was in fact founded on the 'liberal peace' thesis, which states that liberal states are more peaceful both in their internal and external relations. This is based on two propositions: that economic liberalisation (growth and trade) prevents war, and that democracies do not fight each other and enjoy more peaceful internal relations. However, policymakers like the UN, bilateral donors or international NGOs, which discovered 'peacebuilding' as a practice and discourse in the early 1990s, did not primarily have this thesis in mind. It was more of a pragmatic response to a set of problems that could be addressed in the new geo-political setting of the post-Cold War. It shouldn't come as a surprise that these interventions were guided by forms of political and economic liberalism, as these were the dominant paradigm in this period.

A review of the peace operations of the past decades shows that results are mixed. That is not surprising, since the differences between local contexts and local logics of war and peace, as well as the form and shape, and mandates and interests of actors involved in peace operations differ greatly. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw general conclusions. There is evidence that the number of armed conflicts has fallen substantially since the end of the Cold War, and that this is partly the result of UN peace missions. But the strength of these operations lies in mitigating or reducing the violence, while ambitions to

achieve sustainable peace by introducing a wide range of reforms often run aground. That is the case, for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where it is difficult enough to halt the violence. But as already mentioned, it is also true in relatively successful cases, like El Salvador. So in many post-war countries, the risk of crisis or resumption of the conflict remains a real danger after peace operations come to an end. This has led to an increasing questioning of the underlying assumptions of liberal peacebuilding like: Can it be done? Is this realistic? Or is it a mission impossible? Let's look at some of the criticisms of the idea that the best way to build peace is by introducing a model of free markets and liberal democracy.

Firstly, the idea that reforms in different spheres reinforce each other is questioned. In that regard there is a striking similarity with the debates on modernisation processes in the 1950s and 1960s. In his foreword to a new edition of Samuel Huntington's book on *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Francis Fukuyama argues that in this period the Third World became a laboratory of social theory and modernisation theorists believed 'that all good things tended to go together', seeing change in various societal sectors as interdependent. 'Economic development would fuel better education, which would lead to value change, which would promote modern politics, and so on in a virtuous circle.' Huntington challenged these assumptions and argued 'that political decay was at least as likely as political development'. He also argued that good elements of modernisation could be at cross-purposes.

Secondly, and in relation to the foregoing, contemporary authors have pointed at the built-in tensions of political and economic liberalisation. For instance, it is argued that economic development is a crucial *precondition* for liberal peace, or that state-building should precede democratisation. That would imply that a liberal peace is best possible in countries that are at least 'middle income' countries. Others see state-building as a destabilising and often violent process. In his book *At War's End*, Roland Paris pointed at the problems of market-liberalisation in a context where institutions are weak. Paris argues that the building of strong national level institutions should be

the priority of international actors and they should help to build them before implementing political and economic liberalisation. But this assumes that international actors have the capacity to 'engineer', which is questionable.

A third, more fundamental critique, emphasises the 'political' nature of post-war peacebuilding and argues that this is a contested process between local actors which can also draw in international actors. The argument is then that the differing interests of local and international stakeholders lead in most cases to ongoing negotiations about the implementation of peace agreements. Thus, Michael Barnett and Christoph Zürcher have argued that the interests of local and external actors can be fundamentally opposed. So, even when a peace agreement is signed, 'protracted social conflict' – as Edward Azar's calls it – goes on. One of the key characteristics of these conflicts in Azar's view is the multiplicity of causal factors and dynamics, and the changing goals, actors and targets. A peace agreement does not end the protracted social conflict, but rather changes the dynamics, and possibly also the ways the 'parties' negotiate with each other. But a peace agreement can also lead to new actor constellations and new forms of violence and conflict.

El Salvador

With these points in mind, it is interesting to look back at the case of El Salvador. El Salvador is an interesting case for at least two reasons. Firstly, it was one of the first cases of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations after the Cold War, with the multi-dimensional UN mission ONUSAL playing an important role, together with other important international actors – particularly the US. Generally, it was seen as a success story of peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Secondly, in my view, the peace agreements and peace process in El Salvador reflected a relatively modest agenda for change in a relatively 'easy' local context. According to Stephen Stedmann El Salvador was a relatively easy case of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, because the conflict was in his view not as complex as many others, while there was a lot of donor support and political

support. At the same time the Salvadoran peace agreement had a limited scope and focused on political reform and the demilitarisation of political life. This is what Terence Lyons has called 'demilitarisation of politics'. It means that peace can be built by a relatively limited series of measures, such as the installation of an interim government in which the warring parties participate, reform of the structures which these parties adhere to (the 'institutions of war') into political parties, the demobilisation of the warring parties, and eventually the organisation of elections.

This was really a much more modest agenda of change and international intervention than the one followed in or instance Kosovo. And it is fair to say that El Salvador reflects what Elizabeth Cousens and Krishna Kumar called 'peacebuilding as politics'. The authors state that, in post-war situations, international actors tend to try and work on too many fronts at the same time. That leads to reconstruction 'overload' and an overfull agenda, which cannot be fulfilled in practice. Cousens therefore emphasises the need to make choices and 'to strike a balance between negative and positive peace'. This means that the strategic focus should lie on processes of conflict solution and expanding the scope for political action, or 'the construction or strengthening of authoritative and, eventually, legitimate mechanisms to resolve internal conflict without violence'. 'Peacebuilding as politics', as Cousens calls this approach, is intended as an 'organising principle' that can be useful in determining the 'range, timing, and priorities of international action'. In this approach, therefore, there is no a priori list of 'peacebuilding activities'.

A similar argument was made a couple of years ago by Susan Woodward in an excellent article titled 'Do the 'Root Causes' of Civil War Matter?' Woodward, who worked on and in the Balkans, reaches similar conclusions to Cousens and Kumar. Woodward argues that causes 'as such' are impossible to address, and parties lobby for their own interpretation of causes while the politics of the immediate post-war period are 'a continuing contest over interpretations, relative responsibilities and guilt'. According to Woodward the emphasis in peacebuilding must lie on political mechanisms 'that keep limits on the use of violence as a means to political ends' so as to affect change in 'the extreme

uncertainty over power – who has it, who has a right to it, how access to it is regulated'.

Background and peace process in El Salvador

El Salvador is the smallest country in the Latin American continent. It is half the size of the Netherlands, with approximately 6 million inhabitants. Today between 1.5 and 2.5 million Salvadorans are living in the USA. The civil war (1981-1992) ended when the parties to the conflict (the government of El Salvador and the FMLN) signed a peace agreement. What were the causes of the war? I would argue that there were several causes which reinforced each other. These are firstly the exclusive agro-export model and the failure to pursue inclusive growth, and, secondly, the political regime and the failure to democratise in the 1970s. The economic structure had led to great socioeconomic inequalities, and was sustained by a militarised political system that mainly served the interests of a small oligarchy that controlled the agro-export sector. This oligarchy was often called "Los Catorce", or the fourteen families, but was in reality a group of some 200 families that were extremely powerful. Despite some political and economic reforms in the period after the Second World War, the position of the oligarchy was not fundamentally challenged until 1979. Economic growth that was the result of the diversification of the productive base and the creation of the Central American market did not 'trickle down' to large impoverished sectors. Hence, growth was accompanied by enduring and deepening poverty, and the decades before the war were characterised by processes of political and economic modernisation that failed to include the interests and needs of the poorest sectors of the population.

Once the war had started in the early 1980s, the US recognised the need to change economic and political structures in the country and made it a core element of its counter-insurgency strategy. The US not only supported the Salvadoran military in their struggle against the FMLN guerrilla movement, but also pushed for an economic and political reform program that was implemented by a junta of reformist military and Christian Democrats, and

later by an elected Christian Democratic government. The economic reforms included land reform, nationalisation of the banks, and the export of commodities like cotton, sugar and coffee. The US also pushed for elections, which actually took place as of 1982. This electoral opening during the war years was a limited reform and was rejected by the FMLN. But it did lead to important changes in El Salvador, the most important being the foundation of the Republican Nationalistic Alliance (the ARENA party) which represented the interests of the economic oligarchy (and which was founded by a former leader of the paramilitary forces that were also held responsible for the murder of Archbishop Romero). This was the first time in Salvadoran history that the powerful elites founded 'their own party'. By the end of the 1980s ARENA had become the largest party in El Salvador.

So the USA already supported a triple transition *during* the war years, consisting of security by counter-insurgency, electoralism (or limited democratic reform that did not really affect the power of the military), and substantial economic reform (promoting redistribution and giving an important role to the state). It is interesting to note that this agenda already changed during the war. In the second half of the 1980s the US Agency for International Development (USAID) started to finance Salvadoran think-tanks that conducted economic research and promoted the neoliberal reform agenda. This agenda became very influential for economic policy in El Salvador in the following decades.

A crucial change was the victory of the ARENA party in the parliamentary elections of 1988 and the presidential elections of 1989. Alfredo Cristiani, the new president, represented the reform oriented groups and implemented a neoliberal reform project. He liberalised the Salvadoran economy and privatised state enterprises – undoing the nationalisation of the banks and the export sectors – although he was not able to reverse the land reform programme. It can even be argued that this was not the first priority, as the composition and interests of the economic elites in the country had changed considerably. The traditional oligarchy linked to land and agricultural production had suffered a lot during the war, and there were new

opportunities in sectors like services, finance, commerce and construction. In particular, the economic elites with interests in these new sectors (which Cristiani represented) were also interested in negotiating an end to the war, instead of holding on to the ultimate aim of a military defeat of the FMLN.

The neoliberal program was introduced *before* the peace agreements were signed in El Salvador. The peace agreement also included some measures on land reform, reconciliation, and reconstruction plans, but the core of the agreement was to pacify society by providing a political solution. In the case of El Salvador this meant that the most difficult hurdle to take was to stop the military playing a political role. This also implies that the peace agreements in fact proposed a '*double* transition' and not a triple one. Ruben Zamora, a left-wing Salvadoran politician and political scientist, talked about a deal between the right and left (between ARENA and FMLN), with both parties winning 'something': (more) democracy for the FMLN, and *no* negotiations about economic reform for ARENA. Since both hoped to win the subsequent elections, which were to take place two years after the signing of the peace agreements, this was acceptable for both. It was really a 'deal'.

El Salvador's triple transition

What happened with the three transitions in El Salvador?

With regard to security, the Salvadoran peace accord led to an end of the war and to far-reaching changes regarding the roles of military actors in society: the FMLN guerrilla movement disarmed and transformed into a political party with the same name and the military disappeared from the political stage. This was complemented by the abolition of the former military police forces and the formation of a new civil police force. All in all, the security transition was successful, since political violence was reduced to a minimum and the human rights situation improved substantially.

However, while political violence virtually disappeared, other forms of violence reached extremely high levels. The average number of homicides

resulting from violent crime, clashes between youth gangs and violence in the private sphere today exceed the average number of casualties during the war years and El Salvador is now one of the most violent countries in the world. For many people this has contributed to a feeling of living through a war again. How can we explain this increase in violence and the continuing 'everyday insecurity' and fear that it produces?

Initially, it was suggested that there was a 'security vacuum' resulting from deficiencies as a consequence of the changes in the police apparatus and the problems surrounding the reintegration into society of former members of the armed forces and the guerrilla movement. For instance, there was mention of new (or maybe not so new...) criminal networks of former military officers, which worked together with government officials and drug dealers. This was subject of a special investigation by ONUSAL's Joint Group. Overall the idea was that the 'security vacuum or gap' was of a temporary nature and that the problem could be solved by building better institutions. A second line of argument claimed that the increasing violence was partly related to the war and the social processes in which repression and violence have become embedded in daily interactions has. Philip Bourgois referred to this as 'everyday violence through the systematic distortion of social relations and sensibilities'. A third argument is that the contemporary violence is a manifestation of 'structural violence' and the result of 'historically entrenched political-economic oppression and social inequality'. According to some authors this continuing structural violence is also the *result* of an 'unfavourable peace agreement', which – with hindsight - is seen as a 'bad deal' for the poor in El Salvador.

It is fair to say that all three factors do play a role but, in my view, in the longer term the problem of protracted social exclusion of large parts of the Salvadoran population is key to understanding the new violence. One of the most conspicuous forms of violence in El Salvador is the increase in the number of youth gangs and the violence they use. Although this definitely isn't the only cause or explanation of new forms of violence, gangs are one of the more visible new 'collective actors'.

How did this happen? In the period after the peace agreements local gangs emerged and started to grow in deprived neighbourhoods. But more importantly they started to join one of the two transnational gangs that originated in the US and which are sworn enemies: the *Mara Salvatrucha* (MS) and *Barrio 18* (the Eighteen Street Gang). The local gangs converted themselves into 'cliques' and increasingly obeyed the codes and rules of the larger gangs. So these gangs have a 'transnational' dimension, not so much in terms of hierarchy, but largely symbolic on the basis of a kind of common historical origin. This transnationalism therefore has an important imaginary aspect.

The emergence of these transnational youth gangs is the indirect result of the increasing migration towards the US of the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the changing emigration and deportation polices in the US. In the 1980s large groups of Salvadoran immigrants ended up in the poor neighbourhoods of American cities, including Los Angeles, a city that already had a large Latino community and a long-established gang tradition in which Salvadoran youth started to participate. In the early 1990s (after the Salvador civil war had come to an end), the US authorities began deporting large numbers of arrested or convicted youngsters – particularly those suspected of being gang members – to their countries of origin. From that moment onwards, Central America's gang problem deteriorated badly. This new gang culture led to extreme hostility toward members of rival gangs. Confrontations between gangs intensified rapidly to life and death struggles.

Therefore, while the political actors disarmed, formed political parties, or returned to the barracks, a new actor using violence appeared on the national stage. Dennis Rodgers, who studied gangs in Nicaragua, argues that this is part of a larger trend that has taken place over the past thirty years from 'peasant wars of the twentieth century' to urban wars or urban 'slum' wars of the twenty-first century. He links this to increasing globalisation, the changing economic structure (less dependence on agro-exports), the shifting balance between rich and poor, and changing forms of spatial organization in Central

American cities. It is interesting to note that, according to Rodgers, in the early years of gang activity in Managua (Nicaragua), these gangs did have a more political role and 'emerged as institutions in slums and poor neighbourhoods – that played a role in social structuration and that provided micro regimes of order as well as communal forms of belonging'. But he also argues that the gangs themselves have transformed over time into more predatory and individualistic forms of behaviour. This is interesting, because what Rodgers argues is that gangs did have the potential to become local alternatives to channel grievances, but they no longer do so. Nevertheless, the gangs do have a political impact since they compete with the laws and regulations of the state and thus reflect alternative 'logics of local order'. These local 'orders' are complex, but mostly perverse.

The ongoing violence also has serious consequences for the political transition – the second transition. In the short term this political transition was rather successful. The demilitarisation of political life made possible a further democratisation leading to elections in which opposition parties could freely participate. The importance and success of this process should not be underestimated, as the former parties now 'fight' their struggle in a political arena. Moreover, the FMLN was rather successful. The right-wing ARENA party won the first elections of 1994, but the FMLN political party did very well in municipal and parliamentary elections in the following years and won the presidential elections of 2009 supporting an independent candidate – Mario Funes.

The Salvadoran peace accords also set out to go beyond electoral democracy and included the reform of the judicial sector and the police. These institutional reforms are not easy processes and should be seen as a political struggle in their own right. For instance police reform has led to a better police institution in El Salvador, but one that is still plagued by many problems. So one can build a new police force, but at the same time one should be realistic about the limits to what one can realistically achieve.

But, although the 'recipe' of demilitarising politics seemed to work in the short run, in the longer run it did not. To a large extent this can be explained by the incapacity of the state in El Salvador to deal with the twin problem of ongoing social violence and protracted social exclusion. Jenny Pearce from Bradford University writes in a recent article about a trend in Latin America of perverse state formation and securitised democracies. She argues that the young democracies in Latin America are increasingly subject to the fears and insecurities of the population, enabling the state to build its authority not on the protection of citizen's rights but on its armed encounters and insidious collusions with violent actors. In that process categories of people become 'non-citizens'. A case in point is the way in which the Salvadoran government has launched heavy militarised, highly mediatised and highly ineffective zero-tolerance policies on youth gangs – known as the Mano Dura (Iron Fist) and Super Mano Dura (Super Iron Fist), labelling youth gangs as 'dangerous others'.

Pearce argues that the state in Latin America increasingly claims its legitimacy not from a monopoly of violence but from its *lack* of such a monopoly. She describes a worrisome logic: 'While violence in Latin America is often treated as 'state failure' we may in fact be seeing something more dangerous, the emergence of particular forms of the state, dedicated to the preservation of elite rule, at times combating and at times conceding space to aggressive new elites emerging from illegal accumulation, in which permanent violent engagement with violent 'others' plays into the broad project'. In the process, categories of people are 'sacrificed', particularly young men. Moreover, Pearce argues that elites in the region have themselves never come to abhor and reject violence, nor have they contributed to building a state where violence is legitimately monopolized. The state has never aspired to exercise such a monopoly. State elites have built implicit alliances with local landowners, caciques, and political bosses to preserve the authority of the status quo.

This brings me to the third – economic – transition. As already mentioned, before the peace agreements were signed an ambitious structural adjustment programme was introduced, which supported an entirely new insertion of the

Salvadoran economy in the world economy. I also mentioned that these policies were not fine-tuned with the 'peace agenda', but they did respond to opportunities that were the result of demographic changes: the massive migration of Salvadorans to the USA who sent home remittances. This led to fundamental changes in the Salvadoran economy. While some thirty years ago the production and export of coffee was still the backbone of El Salvador's economy, today the remittances sent home by the millions of Salvadorans living in the USA are the most important source of foreign currency, and other economic sectors – such as non-traditional exports (maquila), service and commerce – have become the most important sectors. So what we see in El Salvador (and other Central American countries) is the end of the agro-exporting economies and the end of the power of the elites and traditional oligarchies linked to land and agricultural production.

It is well know that neoliberal reform packages have been criticised for not being able to address problems of social exclusion and poverty which, in the case of El Salvador, are key problems that were and are important in explaining instability and violence. So it is interesting to note that this new model *did* actually lead to renewed growth – about 6% per annum in the first half of the 1990s and around 3% in the second half of that decade – and reduced poverty– from almost 60% in the beginning of the 1990s to a little over 40% by the end of that decade (without affecting the high levels of income inequality). However, this trend has not continued, and over the past ten years poverty has increased again, while inequality has risen.

Alex Segovia – a leading Salvadoran economist – has argued that in the decades after the civil war the governmental economic agenda was basically the agenda of the powerful economic groups in the country. This may not come as a surprise, since the ARENA party has been in government over the past two decades and represents the interests of economic elites. But it does point to a serious lack of negotiations and consensus-building about economic policies. Instead, the power of business sectors to influence government policy, or to buy or bribe politicians and to obstruct the rule of law has increased. Segovia is concerned about the growing power of these groups,

which are in the process of integrating with other groups in Central American and with international corporations. He states that these Central American elites are more powerful than ever before. This creates a balance of power that sustains economic inequality and leads to further polarization in the social and political spheres. What is needed in his view is more democracy, as well as a stronger state, stronger political parties, and stronger social sectors.

Conclusions

I will finish with some conclusions about the Salvadoran peace process. First, the case of El Salvador very clearly shows that peace agreements *can* be an important deal between the parties to the conflict and *can* address a number of the problems in a society, but not all of them. The core of the peace agreement in El Salvador was the demilitarisation and democratisation of the political system. But other problems were *not* negotiated and 'not agreed upon'.

This is not surprising. A peace process and a peace agreement cannot do everything. In that regard the Salvadoran peace agreement was a realistic agreement that did not propose to do a bit of everything. It also assigned a realistic role to the international community, involved it in key activities like a DDR process, building a new police force and monitoring elections. The tragedy of El Salvador is that this recipe actually worked quite well in the short term, but thereafter, it became clear that without seriously addressing the twin problem of ongoing but changing violence and protracted social exclusion, the liberal peace – or the 'neoliberal' peace – that was created in El Salvador, proved to be temporary.

The case of El Salvador also shows that the three transitions in the spheres of security, political reform and economic reform do take place, but that they do not necessarily support each other, and can be contradictory. Most notably, for 20 years, economic policies remained the domain of El Salvador's economic elites and the chronic problem of social exclusion was not

addressed, but rather resolved by migration to the USA. This migration created new problems that could not easily be addressed.

Do the 'root causes' of conflict matter? In the case of El Salvador an important root cause was addressed: in the political sphere. But it was part of the negotiations to not address solutions to other possible root causes. Does this mean that the Salvadoran peace agreements were too light? I don't think so. In early 1992, they were the right thing to do. Greater attention to a more pro-poor economic programme (including more attention for the tax to GDP ratio, the issue of sectoral investments and discussions about El Salvador's productive base) might have prevented some harm, but this is speculative. The consequences of the changes in Salvadoran society – in particular the consequences of ongoing massive migration to the US and the changes in the economic structure – could not be diagnosed in the early 1990s.

So should the international community have exerted more pressure? I think so. But a peace agreement is a political deal, and there were limits to what local stakeholders wanted to concede – while this was also seen as a fair deal by international stakeholders, like the US. Although the parties to the conflict in El Salvador actually came closer to each other, it proved extremely difficult to reach a more substantive deal on economic reform.

In sum, 18 years after the peace agreements were celebrated in the centre of San Salvador, we must conclude that peace agreements are *temporary* packages that can make a significant difference, but cannot change an entire society. The Salvadoran agreements addressed a number of causes, but failed to address others. Nevertheless, it *could* have been a starting point for more fundamental change. But this should primarily have been the result of a shift in the internal balance of forces, and *not* of more comprehensive peace agreements or more ambitious plans and agendas of international actors.

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